

H1N1 (Swine) Flu & Young Children

The 2009 H1N1 influenza is a new virus. It was once called Swine flu because the genes in the virus are similar to some viruses found in pigs. This virus is not spread by pigs or pork.

H1N1 flu is very contagious and spreads through coughing or sneezing. It can spread if virus droplets are on a door knob or toy, an adult or child touches these and then touches their eyes or mouth.

Young children are at the highest risk for complications from H1N1 just like they are from seasonal influenza.

Symptoms

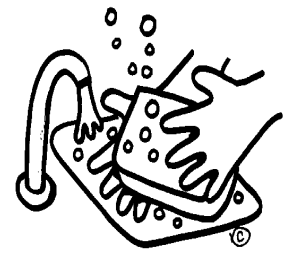
H1N1 flu virus symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, stuffy or runny nose, chills, head and body aches, and fatigue. Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea. Illness with this virus ranges from mild to severe.

Most people recover without needing medical treatment; but hospitalizations and deaths from the H1N1 virus have taken place.

Prevention

The H1N1 vaccine is available for everyone. The Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) recommends that young children, caregivers and parents receive the vaccine.

Handwashing helps prevent H1N1 and other communicable diseases. Children should wash their hands often using soap and water for 15-20 seconds.



Encourage children to avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.

If your child is sick, do not send them to childcare or school. If you or your child has H1N1, there are antiviral medications that can be prescribed by your doctor. The CDC recommends staying home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone.

For more information on H1N1, visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1 or call 800-232-4636.